# CLAIMS

1. A method for failover of a first device to a second device in a storage network, the method comprising steps of:

detecting a failure in the first device;

initializing a second virtual port on the second device;

configuring the second virtual port with an identity of a first virtual port on the first device; and

servicing a set of disks owned by the first device at the second device through the second virtual port.

2. The method of claim 1 wherein the step of detecting a failure comprises the step of detecting a lack of a heartbeat signal from the first device at the second device.

3. The method of claim 1 wherein the step of detecting a failure comprises the step of initiating a failover command.

4. The method of claim 1 wherein the step of configuring the second virtual port further comprises the steps of:

setting a node name of the second virtual port to a node name of the first virtual port; and

setting a port name of the second virtual port to a port name of the first virtual port.

5. The method of claim 4 wherein the storage network comprises a Fibre Channel (FC) network and wherein the node name comprises a FC World Wide Node Name.

6. The method of claim 4 wherein the storage network comprises a Fibre Channel (FC) network and wherein port name comprises a FC World Wide Port Name.

7. The method of claim 1 wherein the first device and second device are storage systems.

8. The method of claim 1 further comprising the step of processing, by the second device, data access requests directed to the second virtual port.

9. The method of claim 8 further comprising the step of processing, by the second device, data access requests directed to a third virtual port, the third virtual port is associated with a physical port.

10. The method of claim 9 wherein the second virtual port is associated with the physical port.

11. The method of claim 1 wherein the second virtual port is associated with one or more virtual ports associated with a physical port.

12. A storage system for use in a storage system cluster, the storage system comprising:

a physical port adapted to communicate over a network;

one or more virtual ports associated with the physical port;

means for adapting one of the virtual ports to assume a network identity of a port of a partner storage system in the storage system cluster;

means for acquiring control of a set of storage devices associated with the partner storage system; and

means for servicing data access requests directed to the assumed network identity.

13. The storage system of claim 7 wherein the means for adapting one of the virtual ports to assume a network identity of a port of a partner storage system in the network further comprises:

means for setting a node name associated with the one virtual port to a node name of the port of the partner storage system in the storage system cluster; and

means for setting a port name of the one of the virtual ports to a port name of the port of the second computer in the network.

14. The storage system of claim 13 wherein the node name comprises a Fibre Channel World Wide Node Name.

15. The storage system of claim 13 wherein the port name comprises a Fibre Channel World Wide Port Name.

16. The storage system of claim 12 wherein the port of the second computer comprises a physical port.

17. The storage system of claim 12 wherein the port of the second computer comprises a virtual port.

18. A computer readable medium, including program instructions executing on a computer, the computer readable medium including instructions for performing the steps of:

detecting, by a first device, a failure of a second device in a cluster;

initializing a first virtual port on the first device, the first virtual port being initialized with a network identity of the second device; and

assuming ownership, by the first device, of a set of storage devices associated with the second device.

19. The computer readable medium of claim 18 wherein the step of initializing the first virtual port further comprises the steps of:

setting a node name of the first virtual port to a node name associated with a port on the second device; and

setting a port name of the first virtual port to a port name associated with a port on the second device.

20. A storage system for use in a storage system cluster, the storage system comprising:

a physical port adapted to communicate over a network;

a first virtual port associated with the physical port, the first virtual port adapted to accept data access requests directed to the storage system; and

a second virtual port associated with the physical port, the second virtual port adapted to assume a network identity of a failed storage system.

21. The storage system of claim 20 wherein the second virtual port is further adapted to process data access requests directed to the network identity of the failed storage appliance.

22. The storage system of claim 20 wherein the second virtual port assumes the network identity of the failed storage system by modifying a virtual port database entry.

23. The storage system of claim 22 wherein the virtual port database entry comprises a node name field and a port name field.

24. The storage system of claim 23 wherein the node name field identifies a Fibre Channel (FC) World Wide Node Name associated with the second virtual port.

25. The storage system of claim 23 wherein the port name field identifies a Fibre Channel (FC) World Wide Port Name associated with the second virtual port.